In the claims:

1-15. Cancelled

16. (Currently amended) A method of printing a digital document, comprising:

providing a first document for printing, the first document comprising at least one functional area wherein pattern markings are to be printed[[,]];

generating from the first document a second document wherein at least one of the shape or location of the at least one functional area is modified[[,]];

obtaining a portion of a pattern to fit the modified functional area; and

printing the second document.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein the first document includes some content.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the step of ~~modifying~~ generating from the first document the second document or obtaining the portion of the pattern for the functional area is performed by a print application.

19. (Currently amended) The method of claim 18 wherein [[the]] a printer driver presents to a user one or more prompts for the user to modify the first document.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of ~~modifying~~ generating from the first document the second document or obtaining the portion of the pattern for the functional area is performed by a print application.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of obtaining the portion of the pattern for the functional area includes a step of requesting a portion of the pattern for the functional area from a pattern allocation device.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21 wherein the amount of the pattern requested and the identity of the portion of the pattern (its location in a pattern [[space)]] is determined according to the size of the modified functional area.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22 wherein the step of requesting a portion of the pattern comprises requesting an area of the pattern larger than that which is required for a functional area of a document and allocating a sub-portion to the functional area according to how the functional area has been modified.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21 wherein the step of requesting a portion of the pattern comprises requesting an area of the pattern larger than that which is required for a functional area of a document and allocating a sub-portion to the functional area according to how the functional area has been modified.

25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of generating from the first document the second document modifying the functional area comprises rotating the functional area relative to [[the]] a remainder of the document.

26. (Currently amended) A digital document printing apparatus, comprising:

a print application which receives a first document for printing, the first document comprising at least one functional area wherein pattern markings are to be printed[[,]];

a document generating means configured to generate from the first document a second document wherein at least one of the shape or location of the at least one functional area is modified[[,]]; and

a pattern allocation unit which is arranged to allocate a portion of a pattern to fit the modified functional area at the request of the print application wherein the print application allocates the portion of the pattern to the functional area according to the functional area's shape or location.

27. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the print application is arranged to generate a print file which comprises a set of instructions.

28. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 27 further comprising a printer configured to print the second document together with the pattern markings.

29. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the pattern allocation unit allocates a portion of the pattern that is larger than that which is required for a functional area and the print application allocates a sub-portion of the portion of the pattern to the functional area.

30. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the pattern allocation unit allocates a portion of the pattern that is larger than that which is required for a functional area and the print application allocates a sub-portion of the portion of the pattern to the functional area.

31. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the pattern allocation unit stores a set of identifiers which uniquely identify each of a set of first documents and allocates a unique portion of the pattern to each document.

32. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the pattern allocation unit stores a set of identifiers which uniquely identify each of a set of first documents and allocates a unique portion of the pattern to each document.

33. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the pattern allocation unit stores a set of identifiers which uniquely identify each of a set of first documents and allocates a unique portion of the pattern to each document.

34. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the pattern allocation unit stores a set of identifiers which uniquely identify each of a set of first documents and allocates a unique portion of the pattern to each document.

35. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium with program code embodied therein for causing when executed, a computer system, to perform a method of:

receiving a first document for printing, the first document comprising at least one functional area wherein pattern markings are to be printed[[,]];

generating from the first document a second document wherein at least one of the shape or location of the at least one functional area is modified[[, and]];

requesting a portion of a pattern to fit the modified functional area from a source of the pattern; and

allocating the portion of the pattern to the functional area according to the functional area's shape or location.

36. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein the identity of the portion of the pattern comprises its location in a pattern space.

37. (New) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the pattern comprises position-identifying background markings printed on a portion of a carrier.